

The Scarlet Letter | Literary Analysis Essay

Prompt: Choose 1 -2 literary elements used by Hawthorne throughout the novel and show how he used the element(s) to develop one of the themes, characters or the plot in general.

Details:

- ✓ 850-1250 words
- ✓ MLA formatting

Please note: A literary analysis essay is not a summary. For a literary analysis essay, you can assume that your audience is familiar with the story, so there is no need to re-tell it. Instead, the purpose of your paper is to explain or prove a point, using the essay format that we have outlined in class. The evidence and support for the statements in your body paragraphs will come from the text and commentary on those quotes, instead of things like statistics or personal experience. The only text you will use for support is the novel. There will be no outside sources.

Literary Analysis Reminders:

- ✓ Include the title and author of the work in the introduction
- ✓ When abbreviating the author's name, use his last name (i.e. Hawthorne, not Nathaniel)
- ✓ Your thesis should make a persuasive claim AND clearly address all parts of the prompt
- ✓ Each body paragraph should include a persuasive topic sentence that clearly supports the thesis
- ✓ Use literary present text when discussing the novel
- ✓ Commentary must be more than a summary of the plot or quote. Instead, it must explain how the quote supports your topic sentence and your thesis
- ✓ Introduce quotations properly and only quote words you need (Don't make your quotes longer than they need to be.) **see Integrating Quotes PPT on Weebly!
- ✓ No first person, no contractions, no be-verbs

Example Thesis Statements (use for inspiration – do not copy!)

- In *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne uses the characterization of Roger Chillingworth and Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale to show how internalized guilt and revenge results in the destruction of oneself and others, and that only the confession of guilt can free one from its devastation.
*literary element = characterization; theme = revenge
- Hawthorne's development of the scarlet letter as a symbol mirrors the transformation of the character Hester Prynne from a state of sin to a state of grace.
*literary element = symbol; character = Hester
- In *The Scarlet Letter*, Nathaniel Hawthorne develops Pearl's nearly demonic, yet oddly playful personality with imagery and uses symbolism to personify the scarlet letter through her.
*literary elements = imagery, symbol; character = Pearl
- Hawthorne uses symbolism throughout the novel to develop the misdeeds of Hester Prynne and the hypocrisy of the Puritan society, but also to show the hope that shines through dark threads of the scarlet letter.
*literary element = symbolism; character/theme = Hester/Hypocrisy